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SUBJECT: IRAN/EU3: LETTER FROM U/S BURNS AND U/S JOSEPH TO
EU3 POLDIRS

REF: SECSTATE 127657

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Josiah Rosenblatt for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) SUMMARY: Post delivered letter from U/S Burns and U/S Joseph to MFA Director for Political and Security Affairs Stanislas LeFebvre de Laboulaye on July 11. In a follow-up conversation on July 19 with Nicolas Roche of the MFA Directorate for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, Roche explained that the French were not informed prior to the removal of the Esfahan seals; that Paris has sent instructions to their mission in Vienna to meet with EU3 partners and later the U.S. to discuss the matter; and that the GOF is working to ensure that such lapses do not occur again. END SUMMARY.

2. (S) Roche explained that the French had received the same information that was outlined in U/Ss Burns and Joseph's letter after the seals at the Esfahan Uranium Conversion Facility (UCF) had been removed. He said that the fact that the EU3 were not informed concerned them and that Paris has sent word to their mission in Vienna to interface with their UK and German colleagues to assess their reaction. After EU3 consultations, he said, U.S. representatives in Vienna would be contacted (this, he estimated, would take place in the coming few days). He said that France learned of the incident from the IAEA itself but had never been consulted prior to the seals coming off. Evidently, he said, the decision to allow the seals to be removed was the result of some dealings that took place privately between the IAEA and Iran. While the French intend on coordinating with their EU partners before taking any action, he said that the French perspective was one of dissatisfaction with the IAEA's procedures and their decision and that the French would like to approach IAEA Deputy Director Olli Heinonen to find out how this could have happened and ensure that it does not happen again. Assuming other EU3 members are on board, the message France would like to convey to the IAEA is that in the future any dealings with the Iranians involving the potential use of nuclear-related equipment must include all parties to the negotiations.

3. (C) Roche said that it will be the experts in Vienna who must determine what activities were undertaken at the UCF, but that it was his understanding that the seals were removed by the inspectors themselves and that the Iranians conducted maintenance that did not involve the use or production of any radioactive material. While France is concerned and wants to ensure that similar exceptions are not made in the future, they do not plan on making any formal presentation accusing the Iranians of wrongdoing because they feel it would hurt their chances of having successful Iran-EU3 negotiations. He added that, according to the IAEA, Iran is currently under full, complete and verified suspension. It was an isolated incident, Roche said, one that must not happen again, but as far as taking Iran to task on it, he said he considered the issue to be closed.

STAPLETON